



Future Water
Association

The Clean Water Bill

Implications for the UK Water Sector & Future Water Members

Executive summary

**Biggest regulatory
reform for
decades**

**Greater emphasis on
resilience, supervision
and long-term planning**

**Continued infrastructure
investment remains central**

**New integrated
regulator replacing
fragmented oversight**

**Significant opportunities
for the supply chain**

**The Bill is about changing
how the sector is regulated
- not reducing investment.**

Political Climate

Government priorities

- Restore public confidence
- Improve environmental performance
- Support economic growth
- Strengthen accountability

Recent milestones

2024 – Water (Special Measures) Act
2025 – Cunliffe Independent Review
2026 – Clean Water Bill introduced

Ministerial Leadership

Emma Hardy MP

Minister of State at DEFRA

Expected to play a leading role in taking the Clean Water Bill through Parliament as part of the Government's wider programme of water reform.

Andy Burnham's Vision for water

Reform

- Public interest first
- Stronger regulation
- Government intervention where necessary

Invest

- Long-term infrastructure
- Regional decision making

Deliver

- Better environmental performance
- Greater resilience
- Water supporting economic growth

The Main Proposals of the Bill



**New Integrated
Regulator**



**Water
Ombudsman**



**Performance
Improvement Regime**



**Stronger Customer
Protection**



**Environmental
Reform**



**Resilience
Standards**



**Water
Efficiency**



**Long-term
Planning**



**Infrastructure
Growth**

The New Model

- From four regulators to one: an Integrated Water Regulator replacing EA, Ofwat, DWI and Natural England oversight
- one view of company performance, earlier intervention, better coordination
- From reactive to proactive: continuous supervision and performance monitoring replace after-the-fact enforcement

Companies will increasingly be judged on whether they can successfully deliver - not simply whether they comply.



Member Implication:

Programme assurance, delivery confidence and evidence of performance become as important as the technical solution.

Customers, environment & water security



Customers at the centre: new Water Ombudsman, stronger consumer advocacy, affordability protections, social tariffs, support for vulnerable customers



Environmental shift: from responding to pollution to preventing it – catchment management, sustainable drainage, nature-based solutions, integrated water management



Water security: smart metering, leakage reduction, water reuse, digital drought communications, improved drinking water protection

Member Implication:

Demand grows across SuDS, nature-based solutions, smart networks and water efficiency.

Water as Growth Infrastructure

The Bill explicitly links water investment to housing delivery, economic growth and strategic infrastructure including the Oxford–Cambridge Growth Corridor and Northern Growth Strategy, alongside competition and planning reform.

Member Implication:

Positions infrastructure delivery, digital water and smart assets within a much bigger growth and planning narrative – useful for winning investment and political support for projects.

Water becomes an enabler of national growth, not simply an environmental service.



Resilience & Long-Term Planning

- Statutory resilience standards
- better asset mapping and network visibility
- long-term capital planning (5 → 10 → 25 year horizons),
- and greater planning stability for integrated investment.

Member Implication:

Longer planning cycles favour members who can demonstrate asset management maturity and strategic, multi-year delivery capability – not just one-off project wins.



Investment outlook

£104 billion of private investment enabled by government to date.

For the supply chain, this signals continued:

- Capital investment and asset renewal
- Digital technology adoption
- Resilience programmes

What this means for members

Opportunities

- Infrastructure delivery & asset renewal
- Digital water & smart assets
- Water efficiency & leakage reduction
- Sustainable drainage & nature-based solutions
- Resilience & long-term asset management
- Strategic planning support

Likely challenges

- Greater scrutiny and higher performance expectations
- Delivery confidence and programme assurance now under the spotlight
- Affordability pressures shaping commercial terms

Members who can evidence delivery - not just compliance - will be best placed to win and retain work under the new regime.

What we still don't know

- Transition arrangements
- internal regulator structure
- implementation timetable
- planning framework
- regulatory cycles
- commercial impacts
- consultation outcomes

Direction of travel is clear. Operational detail is still emerging - members should engage with consultations early to shape the detail rather than react to it.



Key Takeaways

- One integrated regulator, replacing four fragmented bodies
- Proactive supervision and earlier intervention replace reactive enforcement
- Customers, environment and growth are now explicitly linked
- Investment continues at scale – £104 billion and rising
- For Future Water members: significant opportunity, paired with a higher bar on delivery, assurance and long-term capability



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Q&A session

